

The Night II

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The Night II

[a/n: Let me stress that in this story Jake and Cassie are in high school, they are teenagers, they are not 12 years old and in middle school.] Chapter One

(Cassie)

Someone was lightly slapping my face; I batted their hands away and sat up slowly. For a moment I was confused, I didn't know what happened. Then I remembered, and all the pain came rushing back, my soul felt like it had been shattered.

"Cassie?" A hushed voice asked. I opened my eyes, Rachel as sitting in front of me; her eyes were filled with tears. I opened up my arms and we hugged, sharing the pain of losing someone we had both loved, though in different ways. He had been her cousin; he had been and still was, my soulmate. After a while, we let go. "I can't believe it." She said shaking her head slowly. "Will you be okay?" she asked me.

"I don't know." I answered. I heard a cry and jumped up. Amia, I went quickly to her room and scooped her up, rocking her gently against my breast. Rachel stood silently in the doorway.

"I'll call you tomorrow." She said and left, most likely to find solace in Tobias's arms. I sat on my bed and held my daughter all night, trying to come to grips with the loss I knew I could never fully heal from. I looked at the note on my dresser. He had known that something was going to happen, or might. The sun was peeking through the window, I carefully reached over and picked up the note, I opened it. I would read it to Amia, so that from the beginning she would know her father's words. I unfolded the paper and quietly read to the wakening child.

Amia, If you are reading this letter it means that I am dead, perhaps for a long time now, or perhaps you are not reading it at all, maybe Cassie is reading it to you like I expect she would. I am sorry, I know what I am going into, this battle that, if you are reading this letter, have died in because I have decided to write a new letter before each battle, just so that I will not miss anything. I am sorry that I was not there for you, you are so young. I have only known you a few days and already I love you more than anything, you and your mother and the most precious things in my life, you have brought new meaning to everything. I now understand what I could before only imagine. I often looked at my parents, my father, and wondered why he did it, why he put up with everything that comes along with being a parent. But now I know, and I cannot explain it, someday when you have children of your own you will understand. That seems so strange, talking to my newborn child of her children. But even though I was with you so short a time, know that I loved you more than you can imagine. ~ Dad

I refolded the note and slipped it back into the envelope, my tears began to fall, making light spots on Amia's sleeper. I put the letter into a drawer. I didn't sleep that night; I simply sat and tried not to fall apart. There would be time to grieve, time to cry, but not yet. Right then, I just needed to remember to breathe. Amia stirred into wakefulness a few times, but I rocked her back to sleep. She woke up about 7 o'clock. I fed her, then went downstairs. I sat on the couch and absentmindedly turned on the TV.

The early news was on. A reporter was talking to the camera. "Early this morning there was some type of explosion under the city, apparently from a type of underground facility. Rescue workers are looking for survivors, but so far they have been unsuccessful, authorities are at this time trying to find out what the facility was and why it would have been targeted." She said. I heard my mom come up behind me.

"What's this all about?" she asked. It took all my willpower not to confide in her, but I knew that I couldn't, not until the truth was out, if it came out.

"I guess there was some kind of bomb under the city that exploded." I said, trying to keep my voice level.

"How's she doing?" my mom asked, motioning towards Amia. "She's fine, she woke up a few times last night though." I said. She smiled.

"That's normal." She said. I nodded lightly.

"I'm going to take a shower, will you hold her?" I asked my mom. She nodded. "Sure." She said and took her. I could hear her softly talking to Amia as I walked back upstairs. I turned on the shower and got in. I stood there numbly for who knows how long, after a while I noticed that the water had grown icy cold. I could hear my mom knocking on the door.

"Cassie? Are you all right in there?" she asked.

"Yeah, I'm fine." I called gruffly. I turned off the water and sat down in the tub, my head falling into my hands. I began to sob,

silently. My shoulders were jerking and I could hardly breathe. My eyes were spilling and I was rocking back and forth, my arms around my knees. I was freezing from the icy water I had just turned off but I didn't even notice. All I could think of was, Jake was dead, he was dead. Gone from me. I would never again look upon his face, hold his hand, kiss him. I would never see him holding Amia, or looking back at me with the same never-ending love that I felt for him. The dam broke and I couldn't hold my emotions in any longer. I low keening cry broke forth from my throat. I clapped my hand over my mouth, trying to keep quiet but it was no use. I rocked back and forth, my entire body shaking and shuddering. I heard my mom knocking on the door.

"Cassie, what's the matter, are you okay?" she was calling. I couldn't even make my mouth work to answer her. Harsh sobs broke from my mouth. I dimly heard her grab the key to the door that was kept above the doorframe on a nail and put it in the lock and open the door. She came up to the shower/tub and pull back the screen, I was still sitting down, holding my knees, rocking and crying. She grabbed a towel and wrapped it around me and helped me up. "Cassie, my god, what happened, what's wrong?" she asked frantically. I shook my head unable to speak. I put my hand out and motioned for her to leave. She shook her head firmly. "No way, come one. Let's get you dressed." She said and helped me to my room. She tactfully turned her head while I numbly pulled on clothes, not caring if they matched.

When I was done, we went downstairs. Amia was in a playpen, dozing and sucking on a pacifier. "Cassie, what is going on?" she asked. I shook my head.

"Nothing." I gasped.

"Like hell, nothing. I found you upstairs collapsed in the tub, rocking and crying, completely unable to even say a word. I want to know what is going on right now!" she said. I couldn't bring myself to say it, not yet. Then I heard a knock on the door. I numbly sat down on the couch in front of Amia's playpen and let my mom get the door. I heard her open it. "Rachel? Don't you think it's a little early to be seeing Cassie?" I heard my mom ask.

"I know it's early, but is Cassie up?" Rachel asked, she sounded exhausted.

"Yes, she is, and something's wrong, maybe you can find out what it is." My mom said and let Rachel in. They both walked into the living room. I looked up to greet Rachel.

"Oh Cassie." Rachel exclaimed and came to sit next to me. She began to cry, small, silent tears slipping down her cheeks. I cried with her, it was all that I could do at the moment, try to deal. I heard heavy footsteps walk into the house. My dad, he must have been done with his early chores in the barn.

"Good morning, ho-, what's going on here?" he asked, baffled.

"I don't know." She said, and went on to explain how she had found me, while I cried with Rachel. My dad came over to sit next to me.

"Cassie? Honey, what's the matter?" he asked gently. I shook my head.

"Nothing, nothing." I repeated.

"Cassie, it's obvious that there is something wrong, now what is it?" he asked. I shook my head and he gave up for the time being. Rachel left an hour later and the rest of that day and the next went by in a complete numb, daze. My parents continued to ask me what was wrong, but I couldn't tell them.

The evening of the second day Jake's parent's called to see if I knew where he was. We were sitting down to dinner, my parent's were eating, I just stared at my food. The thought of eating made me sick to my stomach. The phone rang and my mom went to get it.

"Yes?" I heard her ask. "Oh, helloâ€|No I haven'tâ€|. He's missing?â€|Both of them?â€|Hold on, I'll ask Cassieâ€|" She leaned in from the kitchen. "Cassie, have you seen Jake lately? His mom says that she hasn't seen him for about 2 days, Tom either." She asked me.

My face crumpled, and I took deep breaths to hold in my tears. A few slipped down my face, but that was it.

"Cassie? Is that what this has been about? Something to do with Jake?" My dad asked. I nodded imperceptibly. He got angry then. "He ran out on you didn't he? Couldn't handle the responsibility of a baby!" he said and stood up angrily. I shook my head.

"No, no, that's not it." I said.

"Nikki? I'll call you back." I heard my mom say. She hung up the phone and came into the dining room. "Cassie, please, tell us what's wrong." My mom pleaded. "I can't." I whispered.

"Why? We're your parents, we love you, we need to know what's wrong so we can help." My dad said.

"You can't help me." I said quietly, and stood up and left. I went outside and started to walk, I didn't know where I was going. Soon I found myself in town, looking at the rubble Jake was buried under. The authorities had thought it was a bomb, which wasn't far from the truth. They knew it was an underground facility. It was too obvious and seen and heard by too many people, the yeerks couldn't cover it up. They had been looking for survivors for two days, but they hadn't found anyone yet. I put my fist to my mouth, I felt like screaming, like running over there and pulling away the cement and rocks with my own hands until I found him. But it wouldn't help, he was dead, and I felt like I had died with him. I slowly walked away from the site and back to my house. My parents were sitting in the living room, watching the news. They were covering the explosion. Bodies had been found, but no survivors, and no Jake.

"I am now reporting from the explosion area of *****. So far there have been 20 reported dead, no survivors." She said, and just as she finished there was a commotion behind her. A little girl was being pulled out, and she was alive. They loaded her onto a stretcher and ran towards and ambulance, and dimly I could hear her say.

"Mommy? Where are you? The tiger saved me, the tiger. And then he

changed into a boy. Mommy?" I froze, if Jake had saved the little girl, and she somehow survived, then there was a chanceâ€¦Bring! The phone rang.

"Cassie?" The caller said. "Marco?" I said.

"Yeah, it's me, were you watching the news?" he asked. He sounded exhausted, but I could hear a sliver of hope in his voice.

"Yeah, do you think." I asked painfully, afraid of the answer.

"I think it's possible." He answered. Neither of us were getting our hopes up too much, it was a slim chance, but it was a chance.

"Call Rachel, I'll call Ax." Marco said.

"Okay, should we meet somewhere?" I asked.

"Yeah, sure." He said.

"How about the barn?" I asked.

"Okay, soon as possible." He said.

"K, bye." I said and hung up, then dialed Rachel's number. She picked up on the 3rd ring.

"Yes?" she asked, she sounded the same as Marco, defeated almost.

"Rachel, they just pulled a little girl out of the, pool, she's alive. And she says that she was saved by a tiger, a tiger who changed into a guy." I said hurriedly. She was quiet for a moment.

"You're sure?" she asked.

"That's what she said anyway, Marco and I both heard it. Do you think it means he could, could be alive?" I asked, hope choking my voice.

"I don't know Cassie, that explosion was really bad." She said. "We would have checked ourselves but we were sure that nothing could have survived." She said.

"Anyway, there's a meeting at the barn." I said, and we hung up. I was about to head out to the barn when I heard Amia crying, I went and picked her up, then realizing she was hungry I fed her. She was dozing as she finished so I placed her back into the playpen and went out to the barn, knowing my mom was in the kitchen if she cried. The rest were waiting for me.

"Sorry, I had to feed Amia." I said apologetically. "No problem." Rachel replied.

{Ok, so what exactly did you hear?} Tobias asked. I sighed and told them what the little girl had said. There was a pause.

"Ok, this doesn't mean that he's alive, but," Marco began.

"It's a chance." Rachel finished.

"A very small chance, even though the odds of survival have been raised due to the statement of the child, it is not a good chance that Prince Jake survived." Ax said with more than a touch of sorrow in his voice.

"I don't care how small the chance is, it's still a chance." I declared. "And tonight I'm going to the site to look."

{Cassie, do you know how many people are there? I think our presence would be a little suspicious.} Tobias said. I shook my head.

"They'll probably be wanting all the volunteers they can get." I said.

"And you know what is under there, the authorities will probably be finding out that something is going on there, maybe even everything. We know that place, if anyone can find him, we can." Rachel said.

"And if by some way, we can try and stop them from covering up the truth at the same timeâ€¦" Marco said.

"Humans would find out about the invasion." I finished.

{And we would have a better chance, a lot better. Obviously they're not read for a public invasion, we could beat them.} Tobias said. I looked at the others, we were in agreement.

"Ok, we go tonight, 11 o'clock." I said and we broke up. I walked back to the house, there was about four hours until I was supposed to meet the others, and hopefully Amia would be asleep as well as my parents.

Chapter Two

(Cassie)

I glanced at the clock. It was ten-fifty. Time to go. I opened the window and began my first morph in months. Feathers grew over my skin and my mouth pushed out to form a beak. My arms shifted and changed into the wings of an owl. Then my eyes grew sharper and clearer than anyone could imagine, my feet became claws and my insides shifted around, the morph was complete. I hopped onto the sill and lifted into the night. The others arrived at about the same time that I did. When we were all de-morphed, Marco pointed at the ruins of a building.

"That's where we got out, and it's where they pulled the kid from." He said.

"It also means that's where a lot of people are going to be, thinking along the lines we are, that people could have survived there, the girl's proof." Rachel said.

"And yeerks," Tobias added. "It's been long enough that any controllers that might have survived could be free, especially if they were going down there for a feeding, not leaving. And they could

have heard about the same thing we did, a man turning into a tiger." "They won't want to leave witnesses. And they would want to catch anyone morphing" I summarized. He nodded.

"But it's still our best bet, so that's where we go." Marco said. We straightened up and headed for the area light up by dozens of lights, flashlights, cars, etc. People were walking around holding shovels and pick axes and jack hammers. Some were using them to dig and others were pulling away rocks with their bare hands. A lot of people were in firefighters uniforms, as well as police and rescue but quite a bit appeared to be average people pitching in. Hopefully we would fit in. We walked casually into the area like we belonged there.

"So what exactly are we supposed to do?" Tobias asked. I shrugged. We all looked at each other; Jake was the one who usually made these kind of plans. Marco sighed.

"Ok, well I guess just go over and start digging." He said and pointed to the yeerk entrance which, strangely enough not many people were digging at it wasn't very obvious as a door anymore.

We dug for hours, ignoring the fact that we grew exhausted, that our hands got sliced from the rocks. Ax and Tobias demorphed and remorphed, and we kept on digging. I ignored the pain; I had definitely felt worse before. And Jake, he might be down there. I clung to that thought through the night, he might be alive. When the sun began to rise I leaned my head against the rock in despair, nothing, no more survivors had been found, and neither had Jake's body. I was almost giving up when I heard something through the rock, a crumbling. I listened closer. Yes! I heard something; someone was down there.

"Rachel!" I hissed, she was leaning with her back against the cement.

"What?" she asked tiredly.

"I hear something." I told her. She shot up and came closer. She put her head against the wall, I could tell when she heard it because her eyes widened and she gasped.

"You're right, I hear something too. Do you think it could be him?" she asked.

"God, I hope so." I said and we began clawing at the rock, Rachel yelled for the others to help. Marco grabbed a crowbar he had found and pried away the heavier ones. I could dimly hear someone calling but his or her voice was too muffled for identification. Finally a rock fell away that made a hole. I leaned toward it and yelled in.

"Hello?" I called.

"Cassie?" a voice yelled back.

"Jake?" I cried.

"It's me, it's me." He answered. I sobbed in relief, Oh god, he was alive, he was alive. We pulled at the rocks until the hole was big

enough, he half crawled out and we helped pull him. We he righted himself I threw myself into his arms and held him as tight as I could. He held on back and the others stepped away tactfully. I was crying against his shoulder.

"I thought you were dead." I whispered against his neck.

"Me too," he replied. I leaned up and kissed him, and he kissed me back.

"I love you," I said against his mouth.

"I love you too," he whispered against mine. I held him tight, my heart about the burst.

"I hate to break up this little reunion, but we have to leave before the yeerks find out you were here." Marco said. I let go of him, but he reached down and grabbed my hand. We all began to hurry out and I noticed Jake wasn't walking very steadily.

"Are you ok?" I asked.

"I haven't eaten or drunken any water for a few days, I'm not in top shape." He replied with a wry grin.

When we were out of sight of the area we stopped.

"Jake, man is it good to see you," Marco said slapping him on the back, then making a mock face hugging him quickly. Rachel hugged him tightly and laughed then let go and let the others in.

"Man, how are we going to explain this to your parents?" Marco wondered. Jake sighed.

"There are others down there, the rescue workers will find them, free controllers. There are a lot of them, and some yeerk technology, which obviously isn't human, and yeerks still in the pool. I'm pretty sure the yeerks won't be able to cover this up." He said. I looked at him disbelieving, after all this time, the end was finally in sight, at least an end to the private war. The others were experiencing the same. We had figured that's what would happen, but this was actual proof.

"I'll go back and make sure the rescuers start digging there, Jake you need some rest man." Marco said and began walking back to the site.

"Actually, I'd like to go see Amia." He said. I nodded. Ax stepped forward.

"Welcome back, Prince Jake, it was not the same without you." He said. Jake smiled tiredly.

"Don't call me Prince." He replied. Ax laughed and he, Rachel and Tobias left. I looked at Jake.

"I thought you were dead, I felt like I was going to die." I said softly. His arms came around me.

"Everything's fine now." He murmured, stroking my hair with his lips.

"You have no idea how I felt when I heard your voice, I thought I would die without ever seeing you again, you or Amia." He said. I clung to him and he held me close. After awhile I pulled back.

"Mia will be waking up soon." I said using the nickname we had given her. "And she'll be hungry."

He grabbed my hand and we walked slowly to my house. We sneaked in through the front door, Jake went up to my room and I went to the kitchen to get him something to eat and drink and some wash clothes for our cuts. He was lying on my bed when I got up there, half-asleep. He sat up and I handed him the food and water, he ate and drank it quickly, he must have been starving.

"Can I peek in on her now?" he asked impatiently.

"Let me wash these cuts first." I said and I quickly wiped the blood and dirt away from both of us. We tiptoed quietly to her room and opened the door silently. We must have made a noise because she woke up and began to cry. Jake went and picked her up quickly, rocking her gently and kissing the top of her head softly. My heart melted at the sight of them, they really were my family and I loved them more than I thought possible.

"She's wet." He whispered. I smiled and reached out for her, laying her on the changing table and quickly put on a fresh diaper.

When she was done I picked her up and sat in the chair. She was antsy and I knew she was hungry. Jake closed the door and I began to feed her. We didn't speak, there was no need to, we both knew what the other was feeling. When Mia was finished I gave her to Jake to burp. It was about six in the morning; my parents would be up soon. Jake rocked her and walked her for awhile until I heard my parents getting up. My mom walked down the hall and must have heard us because she opened the door.

"Cassie? You-Jake? What are you doing here? Your parents have been looking everywhere!" she exclaimed.

"Long story." He replied.

"Well then I'm sure we'll have time to hear it." She said. I nodded and shooshed her out.

"If you wouldn't mind, I'd like to take a shower." He said. I nodded and he left to do that. I looked at myself; I was dusty and dirty.

"I guess mommy needs a shower too, huh Mia?" I said to the baby. When Jake was done I gave Amia to him and took a shower myself, then we went downstairs.

My parents were watching the morning news. They looked at us when we came in. Surprisingly they didn't say anything about Jake.

"They've uncovered something about the explosion. They found a bunch of people alive and they're talking about some kind of alien invasion, they found some strange technology too, obviously not alien, but still interesting." My dad said.

I looked at Jake and smiled, finally the world would know the secret, we wouldn't be alone.

Epilogue

All of the animorphs were at Jake's when it happened, with our parents. We had been told that the president would be making a speech and to gather our family and friends, we knew what it was so we dragged our families to Jake's. The family room grew silent when the president came on screen. He looked into the camera and began to speak.

"My fellow Americans. Today is a day that will be remembered in all the years to come, for this is the day that the truth is known. The truth about something that has been happening for years, something that we the government had not even known until recently. Earth is being invaded; no this is not a joke. This is pure, horrible reality. Aliens are invading Earth; they have been here secretly for years, infiltrating our people. But they are a secret no more, we will no longer be passive victims for them, we will fight back and we will not let them take us, under any circumstances." He said forcefully.

Then began the barrage of questions from reporters. Our families sat in shock. Marco was the first. He leapt up and began to yell. The rest of us joined in, we hugged each other and yelled and cried.

"What the hell is going on here?" My dad yelled.

"We'll tell you in a minute." I promised him through my tears. Jake came and drug me into his arms. I held him and gloried in the feeling of freedom, and of being in the arms of the one I loved. I heard Mia whimpering and I smiled, knowing my daughter would grow up in a world of freedom, because we would win, we would. We would do it united as one race fighting for one cause, freedom. And our story would be known, the story of six children grown up too fast who fought against all odds and brought freedom to a race, we fight for hope, and love, and for freedom, and that is why we will win.

[a/n: Like I said, Jake and Cassie are in High School during this fic, and High school girls do have babies, don't tell me different there are enough pregnant girls at my school for me to see plainly that it happens.]

End
file.